

LSTA Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

June 1, 2017

Attendance: Tanya Misselt, Cherie Sanderson, Rachel Arndt, Shannon Schultz, Tessa Michaelson Schmidt, John DeBacher, Terrie Howe, Megan Rogan, Martha Berninger, Ben Miller, Kristin Stoeger, Inese Christman, Brian Williams-VanKlooster, Joe Davies, Amanda Hegge, Kurt Kiefer

Excused: Omar Poler, Katharine Clark

Introductions

All in attendance introduced themselves and welcomed Williams-VanKlooster to the Advisory Committee.

Public Hearing

No members of the public present. Letters from Mark Arend and Michele Kimpton were reviewed.

Welcome and Remarks about future of LSTA

DeBacher thanked the group for showing up. The division will be proposing a change in the budget as proposed at the December 2016 meeting of the LSTA Advisory Committee due to uncertainty in federal funding. Statewide projects such as WISCAT will continue to be funded as it provides the only source of interlibrary loan for school libraries. It also provides public libraries with access to many university libraries. IMLS funding doesn't come on either the calendar or fiscal year, so the calendar was previously adjusted. For some time, the federal budget has been operating on a Continuing Resolution basis and future budget scenarios are still very unclear. DPI has released a basic statement about the approach to continue services under the current staffing capacity and budget uncertainty. It was vetted by the State Superintendent and previously shared with the committee in the meeting materials.

Kiefer thanked the committee for their work and interest in serving on the LSTA Advisory Committee. Most library funding is provided at the local level. The state also provides money to libraries for regional activities. A motion has been made at the Joint Finance Committee to increase the amount of state aid to library systems and was passed unanimously. The division is currently working on verifying details. Federal funding largely comes through the LSTA Grants to State program. This money is used to support statewide services. Today, DPI staff will talk about how that money has been spent in the past, and how they see this money being spent for the next 5 years. DPI is extremely committed to the issue of equity. The State Superintendent believes that no matter where in Wisconsin a person lives, they should be able to enjoy an equitable level of service. The Division of Libraries and Technology supports this vision and wants to make sure we use scale to leverage federal funds in the most cost effective way possible. Kiefer then opened the floor to comments from the committee.

Williams-VanKlooster asked about what the division views as existing inequities. Kiefer referenced the previous system Lean studies and the services that are offered to libraries regionally. The

division sees money flowing more freely in urban and suburban areas while rural areas are being left behind. The division is interested in increasing the level of services in more rural areas while maintaining exceptional service in those areas that already provide them. Howe stated that there are currently major variations in the services library systems provide to member libraries and just getting a handle on what services are provided will be very important.

Christman asked about how the Public Library System Redesign fits into this discussion. Kiefer responded that the redesign was established by State Superintendent Tony Evers as recommended by COLAND. The expectation of the process is that it will improve services at the system level, which will ultimately increase equity in the services libraries receive in all areas of the state, both rural and urban/suburban. Because the process has intentionally engaged the people closest to the work, it has a great chance at being successful. The process is attempting to be as transparent and open as possible. With projects like this, transparency is always a challenge, but leadership and the project managers are constantly working on improving and increasing transparency and clear communication. Feedback received has been extremely helpful in moving this forward.

Arndt asked about lobbying efforts and how to make sure people know what we need. Kiefer recommended that the most important advocacy piece is bringing legislators and decision makers into local libraries to see the great work being done every day. WLA's Libraries Transform effort has been very successful in moving this happening. At National Library Legislative Day, the group attending meetings invited DC legislators to local libraries over their summer recess.

Sanderson mentioned a volunteer event where they discussed the services funded by LSTA and whether or not the state will step up if the federal budget cuts the program. Kiefer reported that there is no current plan for the state to pick up any of the funding for these statewide services. DeBacher mentioned that the system aid increase was lobbied for to support broadband service and workforce development, not statewide services. Kiefer recommended advocating on how much resource sharing and other statewide services helps Wisconsin residents as opposed to talking about what people would lose if funding was cut. Play into the prevailing attitude in Washington D.C. about federalism and states rights. The Grants to States program is a model for this type of funding. Misselt asked for clarification on "Block Grants." Kiefer and DeBacher explained that block grants have general guidelines, but can be expended based on local control decisions.

Stoeger asked about the Basic Statement and the elimination of competitive grants going away permanently. Kiefer responded that the goal is to not eliminate them permanently, but temporarily not funding them while we navigate difficult funding cycles. DPI believes strongly that these grants are valuable in trying out new and exciting initiatives in the state that could be scaled up to a statewide level. Schmidt added that one of the intentions with the basic statement was to make sure that grant applicants were communicated with clearly and didn't expect grants to be funded for the year. Stoeger clarified that for 2017, no competitive grants would be funded, but for 2018 and beyond, no decision has been made so far. DeBacher confirmed this was correct. Potentially the LSTA Advisory Committee will be pulled together virtually to discuss further adjustments as the 2016 budget year is closed out. If there is more or less funding available additional adjustments might need to be made. Kiefer added that the Division is also looking into additional funding sources to be used for library services in Wisconsin. This year a substantial amount of money was transferred to an alternate funding source to free up LSTA money. In the

budget process, additional funding sources are being proposed that could even further free up LSTA money. Small and rural areas were also given a boost in the TEACH program as more and more schools are using digital resources in schools. This funding did not include libraries. DPI is continuing to have conversations in hopes of adding libraries to both infrastructure and training funding related to broadband in small and rural areas. WLA has been a fantastic partner in these types of lobbying and advocacy efforts.

DeBacher added that costs for things like Learning Express Library can hopefully be moved off of LSTA as well. At the federal level ALA has given assurance to COSLA that they feel Grants to States is likely to be funded, it might be cut, but they don't see it being eliminated. The Division is cautiously optimistic that this will be true. Today we need to review changes to the funding and 2017 projects and get the committee's endorsement on a plan to use the funding. The Division has also prepared a new 5-year plan for the LSTA program and would like to see it approved. Despite funding uncertainty, DPI is still required to prepare a new 5-year plan. Planning is always important and provides a chance to look for opportunities and potential improvements to library service. Finally, the group will discuss future activities of the LSTA Advisory Committee moving forward throughout the year.

Break

December 2016 Meeting Minutes

The Committee approved the minutes by consensus.

LSTA Coordinator Update

Howe reported that DeBacher and herself attended a IMLS meeting in St. Louis earlier this year. Because IMLS has been in this situation before, they did not dwell on federal funding issues at the meeting. In subsequent communications, IMLS is optimistic that the President's budget will not be approved by Congress. DeBacher noted that the budget includes money to shut down IMLS funding and isn't being proposed to be cut entirely. Kiefer relayed parting words from a staffer in Paul Ryan's office during National Library Legislative Day. Many legislators on both sides of the aisle have supported domestic funding in the past and they will not simply give up that support based on a single budget document. DeBacher added that DPI is still waiting on payment for the second payment of the 2017 budget that has been approved in the Continuing Resolution process.

Howe thanked everyone on the committee for being part of this process. She feels privileged to be a part of it and will be retiring effective June 2.

2017 LSTA Budget Update

DeBacher noted that two documents have been shared with the committee: a budget spreadsheet and revised projects and resources narrative document. He referenced the budget document and noted that DPI will be able to fund the adjusted budget without the second payment already approved but not received. Once the second payment has been received, it will give the Division flexibility to fund statewide projects through September 2018. Staff vacancies have also provided an additional cushion to the budget since December. Staff salaries have been flat funded for the past two years.

Misselt wanted clarification on the budget timeframe. DeBacher explained that because most libraries and library systems work on calendar years, DPI operates on a fiscal year, and IMLS distributes LSTA funds on a Federal Fiscal Year it adds a layer of complexity to the budget timeline. Howe added that we are still working on spending down 2016 money. LSTA funds need to be spent within two years of receipt. We are currently looking at the 2017 budget and are still waiting for payment for the second half of the 2017 projected budget.

DeBacher noted that traditionally at this meeting, the committee would be considering how to fund programs in the 2018 LSTA year. Based on future funding decisions, this group will need to come together and make those decisions at a later date.

Stoeger asked if the budget goes through in our favor this fall, would we have an excess of money that needs to be spent by September 2018. DeBacher confirmed that this would be true and the committee would need to identify projects that would be funded. Potentially projects that would be funded later could be front loaded. PLSR might need additional funding for pilot projects as well. Schmidt noted that this shuffle happens every year depending on funding decisions and changes in approved projects. DeBacher added that most years we fund projects above our actual award amount using carryover from previous years, expending the older money first. Howe's work was also commended in preparing all of the ongoing work for describing projects and funding as well as evaluating the past 5-year plan and preparing a new 5-year plan.

DeBacher and Schmidt walked through the budget spreadsheet line by line to explain the adjustments being proposed for the remainder of the year. Funding for the coding project was reduced. WiLEAD was eliminated this year based on the vacancy of the Technology Consultant position who was leading the project. The YSS Continuing Education Project and CCBD Database Development Project were both eliminated. The School Library eBook Project is being transferred to another funding source. Content Creation, Digitization of Library Historical Material, Outcome Measurement Support, Accessibility, and Literacy categories for competitive grants have been eliminated for the 2017 year. All other projects will be funded as previously planned.

Lunch

2017 LSTA Program Plan

WI Public Library Coding Project

Schmidt explained that the Coding Project funding was reduced from \$100,000 to \$25,000 to make it more feasible with a reduced level of staffing. Additionally, lessons learned in the first year of the project affected the level of funding. Debacher added that another DPI team has been working with the Division that are currently performing school outreach around coding. Schmidt checked in with the group on their comfort in reducing funding in this category. Christman asked about how WISELearn is budgeted. Debacher explained the restrictions around personnel and that the budget come from the state legislature.

Misselt commented that she understands the need for adjusting the 2017 budget and agreed with the rationale and was ready to move on.

Stoeger wanted to confirm that the amount budgeted for PLSR will take the project through to completion. DeBacher confirmed that it would. There is a potential for additional funding necessary for pilot projects and other activities that might be required to carry out the recommendations made by the PLSR Steering Committee.

Schmidt brought up the 2017 budget spreadsheet and asked if there were questions on specific line item adjustments. DeBacher explained that he altered the Learning Express Library line based on a conversation with Rogan at lunch to be more accurate.

Christman moved to approve the adjusted 2017 budget, Stoeger seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Misselt wanted to be sure this adjustment would be transparent outside of this committee and asked if this would be presented online to the wider library community. DeBacher explained that much of this has been communicated in the released DPI LSTA Basic Statement. Schmidt clarified that a simple number budget and 5-year plan would be shared out. Having it passed by this group was necessary before any wider messaging could be shared.

Christman clarified that grant recipients were notified already. Schmidt and Howe confirmed they had been. The wider message about competitive grant will be shared in the future.

Arndt wanted to clarify that the LSTA Advisory Committee certainly could have made a different recommendation based on the information presented. She and the rest of the committee made a conscious choice with their vote to continue funding valuable statewide services. Christman agreed and stated that she believes the plan proposed by the division makes more sense than funding the competitive grants. Misselt said that she also agreed with Kiefer's optimistic tone and that this plan will provide the greatest good in the long term for libraries in the state.

Kiefer thanked the committee for thinking about this and making a tough decision. He reiterated that competitive grants aren't gone for good and that the Division hopes that they will return in the future.

2018-2022 LSTA Plan for Wisconsin

Schmidt explained that this presentation was adapted from the 2017 WAPL presentation and the slideshow is a visual representation of the 5-year LSTA plan. Howe will be taking notes as she needs to incorporate any suggestions or alterations before the end of the day tomorrow (June 2).

Division staff reviewed the evaluation and contents of the upcoming 5-year plan, both developed in consultation with Rainbow Research and Library Strategies, library consulting firms.

Group Discussion on LSTA Plan

Schmidt invited the group to comment on the plan as presented.

Misselt liked the response to the concern about difficulty in applying for grants and making shelf-ready mini grants available. The feedback received from stakeholders seemed to be very honest and she feels the Division is responding well to that feedback. DeBacher noted this is an advantage of using an outside consulting group to prepare these documents and hold the focus groups and feedback sessions. Outside consultants have also helped push DPI to align more closely with nationwide IMLS guidelines.

Williams-VanKlooster observed that the summer library program activities are unique as they come to libraries pre-packaged. It seems to be universally adopted in every library that serves youth. This is a great example of a project that is developed at the state level, but can scale up and down. He was also encouraged to hear that the state is focusing on outcomes to help tell the library story outside of just stats and numbers. The state needs coordinated support to help libraries tell stories both locally and at the state level to legislators. Kiefer noted that Wisconsin isn't the only state having this conversation. COSLA is working on a nationwide initiative called Measures that Matter that is discussing this exact topic. More to come over the course of this year. Arndt added that having the ability to track successes and failures is often a barrier to moving to a new data system. Things like Project Outcome can help tell that story and add the context to new reporting metrics. This should make it an easier jump for libraries to take.

DeBacher asked if the group was ok with the group for the plan to be submitted to IMLS as presented.

Arndt moved to accept the LSTA 2018-2022 Plan as presented, Hegge seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Final Comments

DeBacher reminded the committee that they may be called back together if the funding landscape changes. There is currently no framework for 2018 grant categories, but the Division and committee will need to work to enact the 5-year plan moving forward with a sense of energy, but not with a need for urgency. The plan will be submitted to IMLS by June 30. A final evaluation of 2016 funded projects will also be carried out and submitted over the summer. The Division will pass along information about the future of IMLS as it is received, but WLA and other groups will also be passing news along.

Kiefer reiterated that there are aspects of the LSTA program the Division is going to look at strategically. Other fund sources will be looked at as well. The Division feels that federal funds need to be used regional and not locally. The intent is to be transparent and will hopefully align well with PLSR recommendations. If done the right way, we won't bring any library or system down, but will rather raise the level of service for everyone in the state.

Kiefer thanked Howe for being an integral part of the team for almost 10 years. The LSTA program wouldn't function the way it has without her passion and dedication.

Howe reminded the committee that she will be watching...

Adjourn

Christman moved to adjourn, Williams-VanKlooster seconded. Meeting adjourned at 2:04 pm.

